

LETTERS TO FATHER, WIFE AND LAST LOVE: VASILII GROSSMAN'S EPISTOLARY LEGACY¹

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The paper presents three important non-published corpora of Grossman's letters that the authors of the article prepare for the publication. First – Grossman's letters to his father Solomon Iosifovich (1873–1956); these are familiar to his biographers but unknown to the general reader. Second – the letters between Grossman and his wife Ol'ga Mikhailovna Guber (1906–1988); this corpus has long been known about, but until now no scholar has had the opportunity to read even a significant part of it. Third – a collection known only to a few people – Grossman's letters to his last love, Ekaterina Zabolotskaia (1906–1997). Through reading the entire corpora of letters readers will, for the first time, be granted the opportunity to get to know Grossman not through the interpretations of scholars, but directly, without any filter.

Keywords: Vasilii Grossman, Correspondence, Archival Research

1. Introduction²

The fate of Vasilii Grossman's epistolary legacy is complex and at times confusing. It is well-known that Grossman corresponded with many people throughout his life, but it is still largely unknown which letters have survived and where they are now located. Of course, there are corpora or individual letters the location of which is identified: for instance, the collections of the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), the State Museum of the History of Russian Literature, Grossman's family archives, Harvard University library, the archive of The University of Notre Dame (Indiana) etc., but much remains to be established. Only a very small part of the correspondence has been published: 1967 saw the publication, with some abridgements, of Grossman's letters to his wife from his trip to Armenia in 1961 (Avakian 1967, 351–362); several letters to his father were published in a collection of the correspondence of Soviet writers during WWII (Go-

¹ We are deeply grateful to Robert Chandler for revising the English text of the article as well as for translating all the quotations from Russian into English. We would also like to thank the Study Center Vasily Grossman for its support.

² This work is the result of the close collaboration between the two authors. However, Anna Krasnikova is responsible for sections 1–3 and Julia Volokhova for sections 4–5.

riaeva et al. 2015), letters to Semën Lipkin were published in 2016 (Grossman 2016). In other publications – the main ones will be mentioned in this article – Grossman's letters were only quoted, not cited in their entirety or as a whole corpus.

We have been fortunate to gain access to three important non-published corpora of Grossman's letters. First – Grossman's letters to his father Solomon Iosifovich (1873–1956); these are familiar to his biographers but unknown to the general reader. Second – the letters between Grossman and his wife Ol'ga Mikhailovna Guber (1906–1988); this corpus has long been known about, but until now no scholar has had the opportunity to read even a significant part of it. Third – a collection known only to a few people – Grossman's letters to his last love, Ekaterina Zabolotskaia (1906–1997). It was probably these three people who, at different periods of his life, were the closest to Grossman – were, in effect, his family. They and, of course, his mother Ekaterina Savel'evna, who was killed in Berdichev in 1941 – but very few of Grossman's letters to her have survived.

We are currently studying and preparing all three corpora for publication, but although the work is still in progress, it is already evident to what extent these documents can change or deepen our perception and understanding of the writer's personality, the facts of his biography, his inner circle and his relationships to people in general, his attitudes, his values³.

In this article, we will describe these collections, one by one, and try to demonstrate how they may change our views of Grossman's life and work.

2. *Letters to Solomon Iosifovich Grossman*

The story of the discovery of this collection is remarkable: in spring 1963, before going to hospital for an operation to remove a kidney, Vasilii Grossman gave Ekaterina Zabolotskaia a package of letters wrapped in paper. He said they were letters written by his mother Ekaterina Savel'evna to his father Solomon Iosifovich and asked her to keep them safe and destroy them after his death. Zabolotskaia kept this package, unopened, for many years after Grossman's death in 1964, and did not dare to burn it. When, in 1990, she finally decided to follow the writer's will, she called his close friend Semën Lipkin, who advised her to first remove the wrapping and see what was inside.

И вот я раскрыла пакет. Увидя знакомый почерк, была потрясена: это письма Василия Семеновича к Семену Осиповичу!

Любовью собраны и сохранены все письма, незначительные записки, даже обрывок страницы с непонятными записями рукой Василия Семеновича. Конечно я не могла их сжечь⁴. (RGALI, f. 1710, op. 3, ed. khr. 64, p. 1b)

³ The book of Grossman's correspondence in Russian, as we hope, will be published in the near future by the Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie Publishing House.

⁴ "And so I opened the package. Seeing the familiar handwriting, I was shaken. These were letters from Vasilii Semënovich to Semën Osipovich! Everything – the letters themselves, unimportant notes, even a scrap of paper with some incomprehensible notes by Vasilii Semënovich himself – had been lovingly collected and preserved. Of course I could not burn them."

Zabolotskaia handed the letters over to the Central State Archive of Literature and Art (now RGALI; F. 1710, op. 3, ed. khr. 64–72). She concluded her cover note of 29 December 1990 with the words: “Оправдываюсь перед Василием Семеновичем Гроссманом тем, что обещала я сжечь письма Екатерины Савельевны, а оказались в пачке письма ero” (RGALI, f. 1710, op. 3, ed. khr. 64, p. 1b). [My excuse to Vasilii Semënovich Grossman is that I promised to burn Ekaterina Savel’evna’s letters – not these letters.]

Zabolotskaia also made several copies – for herself, for Semën Lipkin, for Grossman’s daughter Ekaterina Korotkova and for his stepson Fëdor Guber. Since access to these letters in RGALI was restricted by Fëdor Guber (these restrictions were lifted in 2002), she later gave another copy of the complete corpus to the American scholars John and Carol Garrard, who used it for their book *The Bones of Berdichev: The Life and Fate of Vasily Grossman* (Garrard, Garrard 1996)⁵. It was thanks to the Garrards that copies of these letters, as well as certain other documents, ended up in the collections of the Harvard University library⁶ and were thus made available to researchers.

Due to these circumstances, Grossman’s letters to his father were inaccessible, for example, to Anatolii Bocharov, the author of the first serious works on Grossman’s life and work: a critical and biographical essay published in 1970 and a monograph in 1990 (Bocharov 1970; Bocharov 1990). Since the mid-1990s the copies of these letters have been actively used by biographers, and since the late 2000s, researchers have also been working with the originals preserved in RGALI. In fact, all the authors of Grossman’s biographies (Garrard, Garrard 1996; Anissimov 2012; Fel’dman, Bit-IUnan 2015; Popoff 2019) use this source to a greater or lesser extent, as a valuable and often unique source of information enabling the reconstruction of the writer’s early biography, his circle of interests during his student years, his career as a writer, and his personal and family relationships.

Zabolotskaia wrote that the package contained 200 letters (all without envelopes, 180 dated and 20 undated) sent by Grossman to his father from 1925 to 1956: plus one letter from Semën Lipkin and one from Ekaterina Korotkova. But in fact, this collection also contained two letters from Grossman to his mother, two to his father’s wife Ol’ga Semënovna, and one to Zhenni Genrikhovna Genrikhson, the nanny of Ol’ga Guber’s children, who lived with their family; Zabolotskaia probably simply failed to notice them. These letters are preserved in the main corpus of the letters to father in the Harvard copies and were filed as three separate units in RGALI (f. 1710, op. 3, ed. khr. 62, 63, 73, 75).

According to our calculations, there are 192 letters and postcards from Grossman to his father, 1 telegram, 7 short notes, 2 letters to his mother, 2 to Ol’ga Semënovna, and 1 letter from Katia to her grandfather. The letters are written on different paper, in different ink

⁵ In 2012 the book was reprinted with the title *The Life and Fate of Vasily Grossman* (Garrard, Garrard 2012). “Among these remarkable people the most important is Yekaterina Vasilievna Zabolotskaya. Without her generous assistance, we would not have been able to draw upon over 200 unpublished letters Grossman wrote to his father at particularly critical moments in his life. Grossman’s stepson Fyodor Guber restricted to his own use access to the originals, which Yekaterina Vasilievna had herself deposited in the Russian State Literature Archive (Grossman bequeathed these letters to her in 1963)” (Garrard, Garrard 2012, 42).

⁶ <https://hollisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/repositories/24/resources/3705>, last accessed July 29, 2023.

and sometimes in pencil. Many of the sheets are faded and some are so worn on the folds that some words are completely or almost completely erased.

Zabolotskaia attempted to arrange the letters in chronological order, but the letters are ordered differently at RGALI and at Harvard. In both cases, it seems that the order of the documents – especially, the undated letters, or those with no indication of the calendar year – has often been jumbled. Seeing it as important to establish the correct chronological order, we analysed the entire corpus, using established facts and information from archival documents as well as the events Grossman mentions, to try to reconstruct the true chronology.

One of the examples of how the confusion in the archives has influenced researchers' hypotheses and interpretation of facts is related to events of 1928. In a letter dated 26 August 1928, Grossman writes to his father that “after a long journey and sufferings” he has arrived in Odessa (“после долгих странствий и мытарств прибыл в Одессу”) and mentions that his mother is feeling well. Quoting this letter David Fel'dman and IUrii Bit-IUnan conclude that having spent holidays with his father:

Гроссман сначала в Москву вернулся из Криницы, где он, жена и отец вместе отдыхали. Потом отправился в Бердичев – там жила мать, с ней до Одессы доехал. Тогда и впрямь “долгие странствия”. А также “мытарства”, если учесть, что в поездах не менее трех суток провел⁸. (Fel'dman, Bit-IUnan 2015, 82–83)

But if we restore the chronological sequence of the correspondence, before the letter dated 26 August we find two undated letters in which Grossman describes in detail his hard and long trip from Krinitsa to Odessa: he with his wife Galia and a certain Liudmila went by cart to Gelendzhik, then by boat to Novorossiisk (during this trip the ladies got seasick), and then, with a long wait for a train, via Rostov and Yekaterinoslav to Odessa.

Another example concerns not chronology, but the interpretation of the information given in the letters. Tatiana Dettmer and Alexandra Popoff suggest that the prototype of the protagonist of *Life and Fate*, Viktor Shtrum, is Lev Shtrum (1890–1936), a physicist from Kiev – and among the main arguments of their hypothesis they cite two references to this surname from Grossman's correspondence with his father⁹. One of the references occurs in a letter dated 27 June 1933, in which Grossman asks his father: “Почему вдруг Ленинск? Ей богу, ‘Штрумск’ мне кажется более подходящим”. [Why Leninsk all of a sudden? To be honest, ‘Shtrumsk’ seems a better idea to me.]

⁷ In all quotations in this publication, we leave the spelling and punctuation of the original.

⁸ First Grossman returned to Moscow from Krinitsa, where he, his wife and father had been on holiday together. Then he went to Berdichev, where his mother lived, and travelled with her to Odessa. Thus, he really had a “long journey”. And also “travails”, given that he spent at least three days in trains.

⁹ See e.g.: “Recently it was discovered that the model for Grossman's central character was the nuclear physicist Lev Shtrum. The head of the theoretical physics department in Kiev's University, he liaised with Landau. In 1936 Shtrum was arrested and shot as an ‘enemy of the people’. Grossman had known him well as a student. (On February 12, 1929, Grossman wrote to his father of meeting Shtrum in Kiev and borrowing money from him.)” (Popoff 2019). See also Dettmer, Popoff 2018.

The meaning of these words becomes clear if we consider these words in the context of Grossman's other letters to his father and his father's wife Ol'ga Semënovna Rodanevich in June 1933. At the time, Iosif Solomonovich was working as a mining chemical engineer. He was not very happy with his job in Novosibirsk and was probably thinking about moving to another city. On 11 June Vasilii Grossman wrote to Ol'ga Semënovna:

Вы пишете о Днепропетровске. По-моему, за эту возможность следует ухватиться. Это большой, хороший город — Киев, Харьков, Москва, Криница, черт возьми, не так далеко от него. Работа интереснее, вероятно, чем в Сталино и тем более, чем в Новосибирске. Мой вам совет, дорогие мои, держите курс на юг¹⁰.

On 16 June he wrote to his father: "Ты решил ехать в Прокопьевск? Во всяком случае, не связывай себя никакими обязательствами на долгие строки, чтобы можно было уйти оттуда." [Have you decided to go to Prokopyevsk? At the very least, don't commit yourself to any long period of time, in case you wish to leave.] Dnepropetrovsk (now Dnipro) is the capital of the Dnepropetrovsk region of Ukraine; it is a mining and metallurgical region. Prokopyevsk, in the Kemerovo region, is one of the largest coal mining towns in Russia; the Leninsk that Grossman mentions in his letter of 27 June is probably Leninsk-Kuznetsky, a city in the Kemerovo region, a coal mining centre in the Altai. So, returning to "Shtrumsk", in this context it is unlikely that Grossman would have used this occasionalism for Kiev, where Lev Shtrum lived. On the contrary, it seems to us far more likely that he was referring by this name to Stalino (now Donetsk), where Grossman and his father had worked, and where they had a mutual acquaintance – Il'ia Iakovlevich Shtrum (1880–1946), director of the Institute of Occupational Health and Pathology and head of the Occupational Health Department at the Medical Institute (Gosudarstvennomu predpriiatiiu 2015: Pertseva 2020). Vasilii Grossman had worked at both places; through his occasionalism modelled on Leninsk – "Why Leninsk all of a sudden? To be honest, 'Shtrumsk' seems a better idea to me" – he was advising his father to choose the Dnepropetrovsk region rather than the Kemerovo region.

The other (chronologically the first) mention of the name "Shtrum" occurs in a letter dated 12 February 1929: "Был у Штрума и взял у него деньги, ибо сидел уже несколько дней на пище святого угодника" [I went to Shtrum and took money from him, because I had been starving for several days]. Dettmer and Popoff conclude from this reference:

As is apparent from one of Grossman's surviving letters, he and Lev Shtrum had known each other for years. On February 12th, 1929, a young Grossman, then a student in the Chemistry Department of Moscow University, wrote to his father that he saw Shtrum in Kiev and borrowed money from him. At 23, Grossman was hard up and had travelled to Kiev to meet his sweetheart (and future wife), Anna

¹⁰ "You write about Dnepropetrovsk. In my opinion, this is the option you should go for. It's a large, fine city – Kiev, Kharkov, Moscow and Krinitsa are not so very far away. The work is probably more interesting than in Stalino, let alone in Novosibirsk. My advice, my dear ones, is to head south."

Matsuk¹¹. His casual reference to Shtrum suggests that the physicist was a family friend. (Dettmer, Popoff 2018)

All this is questionable. The letter contains no mention of a long acquaintance with Lev Shtrum, nor of his first name, nor of Kiev — and it seems unlikely that this trip to Kiev ever even took place. Judging from their correspondence as a whole, Grossman used to tell his father about all his travels, including his visits to his wife in Kiev, and in the second half of January and in February 1929 he repeatedly wrote to his father that he was in Moscow and studying hard. On 26 January, after returning in Moscow from holidays spent in Ukraine, he reports:

[...] вернулся на “родное пепелище”. Начал заниматься, занятия в университете до сих пор слабо налажены, лаборатории работают, а лекции и семинары начнутся по-настоящему с 1 февраля. Думаю к 1 мая освободиться от последней лаборатории, тогда буду себя чувствовать не связанным с университетом “территориально”¹².

On 30 January, responding to his parents' worries about his studies, he writes with added emphasis:

Я совершенно не намерен бросать занятий, наоборот, я сделаю всё возможное, чтобы закончить их в минимальный срок. [...] Занимаюсь я теперь по 10 ч[асов] в день¹³.

Finally, in a letter of 12 February, a few lines before the mention of Shtrum, he writes explicitly that he has been studying almost round the clock and has not seen his wife for a long time:

Как я живу теперь — занимаюсь днем в лаборатории, вечерами и ночами занимаюсь, готовлюсь к зачету по технич[еской] химии; в промежутках между занятиями да и во время их скучаю по Гале. Ужасно гупо и тяжело это — влюбился по-настоящему на склоне лет наконец, женился, и неделю, две поживем вместе, а потом длиннейшие месяцы разлуки. Вот и вся моя жизнь¹⁴.

¹¹ In fact Grossman and Anna Matsuk were already husband and wife: the letters testify that most probably they married in the spring or summer of 1928.

¹² “I’ve returned to my ‘old home’. I’ve begun my studies, though the university is not yet fully functioning. The laboratories are working, but lectures and seminars will only properly begin on 1 February. I hope to be done with my last laboratory by 1 May – then I will no longer be tied ‘territorially’ to the university”.

¹³ “I have no intention whatsoever to abandon my studies. On the contrary, I will do everything possible to complete them in the minimum time. [...] I am now studying ten hours a day”.

¹⁴ “My life now – I work all day in the laboratory, I study evenings and nights, I’m preparing for the exam in chemical engineering. In the intervals between studying, and sometimes during them, I long for Galia. It’s stupid and burdensome. I fall well and truly in love when I’m getting on. I marry. We live together for a week or two. And then, endless months of separation. That’s my life for you”.

And then, having already said goodbye to his father, he adds that he went to Shtrum and borrowed money from him. Thus, if Grossman was really in Moscow, as we think he was, it may well have been some other Shtrum who gave a poor student some money.

These are just two of many examples confirming that the publication of the whole corpus of Grossman's letters to his father, even if they are already available in public archives, and making it possible to read these letters in full, in the correct order, is of great importance. It provides firm ground for discussion of researchers' interpretation of matters of events, chronology, and Grossman's relationships with other people.

3. *Letters to Ol'ga Mikhailovna Guber*

The second major corpus of correspondence is Grossman's letters to his second wife, Ol'ga Mikhailovna Guber¹⁵. The first publication of several of these letters took place in 1967: those written from a trip to Armenia in 1961 (and early 1962) appeared in an anthology dedicated to Armenia *Glazami Druzei* (Avakian 1967, 351–362). Their existence became widely known later, through the publications of Grossman's stepson, Fëdor Borisovich Guber (1931–2020), which appeared in periodicals (Guber 1990, Grossman 1997, Grossman 1998, Grossman 2005, Guber 2005). Guber published various excerpts and complete letters from the family archive: Grossman's letters to his father, to his wife, to his mother Ekaterina Savel'evna, individual letters to other writers, as well as letters from readers and Soviet writers to Grossman. Fëdor Guber synthesised his contributions in *Memory and Letters. A Book about Vasilii Grossman* (Guber 2007). He described the materials used for this publication as follows:

Основой для книги послужили мои личные воспоминания о Василии Гроссмане, а также его многочисленные письма к жене, моей матери Ольге Михайловне Губер и отцу Семену Осиповичу Гроссману. [...] Кроме того использованы многочисленные письма Гроссману от писателей, читателей, многочисленные документы, сохранившиеся у меня, а также некоторые материалы, переданные мамой в ЦГАЛИ, но ранее скопированные. Приведены выдержки из книги близкого друга Василия Гроссмана Семёна Липкина и из воспоминаний о Гроссмане других писателей¹⁶. (Guber 2007, 7)

Grossman's letters to Ol'ga Guber have remained in his heirs' family archives and have been inaccessible to researchers. John and Carol Garrard explain why they did not use these materials in their monograph:

¹⁵ Ol'ga left her first husband for Grossman in 1935; they married in 1936 and were married for the rest of the writer's life (though separated 1956–1958).

¹⁶ The book is based on my personal memories of Vasilii Grossman, as well as his many letters to his wife (my mother Ol'ga Mikhailovna Guber and his father Semën Osipovich Grossman. [...] I have also used letters to Grossman from writers, readers, as well as many other documents I have preserved, and also materials that my mother copied before handing them over to TSGALI. Excerpts from the book by Grossman's close friend Semën Lipkin, and from other writers' memoirs are also included.

On an initial visit, Guber allowed us to copy portions of a photo album of the Lodz Ghetto that Grossman had brought back after the war. But he insisted that we submit for his approval the portions of our manuscript which used any further materials he might share with us. And he adamantly refused us unrestricted access to any of the Grossman materials in his possession. We therefore were unable to see the letters Grossman sent to Olga Mikhailovna, or even the letters Grossman had received from his own mother, Yekaterina Savelievna. [...] Therefore, after long and painful thought, we have decided not to use in this book either the Lodz album or any of the selected materials Guber showed us during our brief discussion with him in the Grossman apartment. (Garrard, Garrard 2012, 43)

The impossibility of checking the letters against the originals, on the one hand, and, on the other, the absence of clear, systematic editorial principles in the preparation of *Memory And Letters* (the dates of the letters and often the addressee are not indicated, the chronological order is constantly violated, etc.) have led some researchers to follow the Garrards' example and not use the materials published by Guber (e.g., Fel'dman, Bit–IUnan 2015). Other researchers into Grossman's biography (e.g., Popoff 2019) quote them selectively and fragmentarily, without any mention of the details and history of their publication.

In May 2023, thanks to Fëdor Guber's daughter Elena Kozhichkina, to whom we are deeply grateful, we received access to these letters. She handed over to us for inspection and copying three green folders kept in Grossman's memorial study in her flat. These were probably collected and assembled by Fëdor Guber while he was working on his book. We can not be sure that these constitute all the surviving correspondence between Grossman and his wife. Moreover, we know for sure that some parts of the surviving letters are missing. While we continue our search for the missing letters, we are confident that the three green folders contain the main part of the correspondence.

In most cases the letters, envelopes, postcards and telegrams were in blank C5 envelopes, purchased by Guber no earlier than 1988 and marked with his marginalia in pen or pencil. These marginalia generally reflect Guber's attempts to date the letters and place them in chronological order. Next to some dates, we see a "V", presumably indicating those letters which were of greatest interest to him and which he used while preparing his publications. The storage envelopes contained postcards, the letters themselves and envelopes from the letters. Some of the storage envelopes are labelled with dates but do not contain materials; sometimes the letters and the corresponding envelopes are placed separately; in other cases empty envelopes from the letters are found inside the storage envelopes; some letters were stored separately at the end of the folders, apart from the stapled storage envelopes. Although we see that Fëdor Guber attempted to arrange the materials in chronological order, he did not always succeed. Not all the materials were dated and some were dated wrongly; in some cases letters inside the folders were arranged chronologically and in others not.

The earliest materials date from 1937, the latest from October 1963. This is the only corpus available to us at present that contains not only Grossman's letters, but also those of his correspondent. Among them are 34 postcards and 155 letters from Grossman to

Ol'ga, 49 letters and 7 postcards from Ol'ga to Grossman, 1 letter from Ol'ga to Zhenni Genrikhovna, 2 letters from Fëdor Guber to Ol'ga and 1 letter from Grossman to Fëdor. This corpus includes correspondence sent from Berdichev and from the WWII fronts, letters sent by Ol'ga from evacuation, letters from the 1950s and 1960s written by the couple when one of them was on a trip, letters from 1963 that Grossman wrote from a sanatorium in Arkhangel'skoe.

Most of the letters are well preserved, with the exception of Ol'ga Guber's wartime letters; many of these are written in pencil, the folds are hard to read, and several letters contain fragments that are difficult to decipher because of the peculiarities of her handwriting.

Materials from this corpus often contain pencil notes, presumably by Fëdor Guber, which do not complicate the reading of the author's text. Some sentences are underlined. Some passages are marked in the margins. Incomplete dates are sometimes supplemented, and not always correctly.

This collection, which covers more than 25 years, is extremely important for Grossman studies: it contains much previously unknown or partly unknown information about the events of his life, his world and also the life of his family, the people around him.

Reading the continuum of correspondence with Ol'ga Guber allows us to establish for certain who constituted his inner circle, who remained close to him even during the most difficult years. Some of this we already knew; the letters from the 1950s–1960s confirm Grossman's close friendship with Semën Lipkin: almost every letter includes some mention of Lipkin. The importance of other close friends, however, has been underestimated. One such example is Efim Kugel', a friend from university about whom Grossman wrote in his story *Phosphorus*. The correspondence shows that they were close friends throughout their lives. When Kugel' was arrested in the 1950's and sentenced to many years in a labour camp, Grossman and Efim Kugel's brother tried to get the case reconsidered and the sentence reduced. On 6 May 1958, Vasilii Grossman wrote to Ol'ga Guber:

Вчера был у брата Ефима. Есть решение комиссии по помилованию — Ефиму сократили срок на 5 лет.

Так как ему оставалось 11 лет, то, значит, с сокращением осталось ему сидеть 6 лет. Он пишет, что с зачётами один день за три — ему эти 6 лет превратятся в 2 года. Конечно, это не то на что мы надеялись, но всё же значительное облегчение. Брат его радуется и полон благодарности¹⁷.

During Grossman's last years they saw each other every week: "Ефим здоров, вижу с ним, как обычно, по воскресеньям" [Efim is well, I see him on Sundays as usual] (28 May 1962). Along with others especially close to Grossman, Kugel' was regularly at his bedside in hospital during his last weeks.

¹⁷ "Yesterday I visited Efim's brother. The amnesty commission has resolved to shorten Efim's sentence by 5 years. Since he had 11 years left, this means that he now has 6 years of his sentence still to serve. Should one day be counted for three, these 6 years would be further reduced to 2 years. Of course, this is not what we had hoped for, but it is still a considerable relief. His brother is happy and full of gratitude".

Another example is Fenia – Faina Abramovna Shkol’nikova, a woman written about both by Grossman’s daughter and by his stepson (Korotkova–Grossman 1998; Guber 2007, 34, 36, 154, 156). During the 1930s, Shkol’nikova was on friendly terms with members of the literary group *Pereval* (above all, with Ol’ga and Boris Guber, and also with Grossman) himself; she was also a friend of Evgeniia Khaiutina, the wife of Nikolai Ezhov (head of the NKVD, 1936–1938). Along with many other members of *Pereval*, Shkol’nikova was arrested in the late 1930s. After her release in 1954, she became very close to Ol’ga Guber and Vasilii Grossman. “Впрочем, с отцом она дружила больше” [Although, she was more friends with my father], writes Ekaterina Korotkova (Korotkova–Grossman 1998, 441).

Numerous letters at our disposal confirm the closeness of Faina Shkol’nikova not only to Grossman and Guber as a couple, but also to Grossman himself, independently. On 8 October 1962, for example, he writes to his wife:

Вчера были с Ефимом [Кугелем. — Ю.В., А.К.] в гостях у Фени. Она нас очень хорошо принимала, богато угощала, радовалась нашему приходу. В благодарность за ее гостеприимство мы ее обыграли в 501 — в общей сложности на 2 рубля (новыми деньгами). Это событие всех огорчило: и выигравших и проигравшую. Да ничего, еще выиграет и Феня¹⁸.

It was probably after conversations with Faina Shkol’nikova that Grossman wrote *Mother*, his story about the wife of Nikolai Ezhov and the Ezhovs’ adopted daughter. It is also probable that Shkol’nikova was one of Grossman’s main sources of information about women’s camps. If we consider Grossman’s inner circle, we see that many people close to him during his last ten years, when he was writing *Life and Fate* and *Everything Flows*, had spent time in prisons, camps and exile. Besides Kugel’ and Shkol’nikova, Grossman regularly saw his cousin Viktor Sherentsis and Ol’ga Guber’s brother Nikolai Sochevets¹⁹, who has much in common with Ivan Grigor’evich, the central character of *Everything Flows*. Even Ol’ga Guber herself was arrested in 1937 and spent several months in prison.

This collection, which covers more than 25 years, contains much information – previously unknown or only partly known – about the events of his life and also the life of his family, the people around him, his work. It also reveals much about his relationship with his wife, a subject on which there has been much speculation²⁰. Not being able to go into detail in this article, we can only point out that he wrote long, warm letters to Ol’ga Guber until almost the end of his life. In a letter of 12 February 1958, while living apart from her, he wrote:

¹⁸ “Yesterday Efim [Kugel’. – A.K., Y.V.] and I visited Fenia. She received us very well, was a generous host and was happy to see us. In gratitude for her hospitality, we beat her in 501 – a total of 2 rubles (in new money). This upset all concerned, both the winners and the loser. But that’s okay, Fenia’s turn to win will come too”.

¹⁹ The letters show that Nikolai Sochevets helped to look after the aquarium and came regularly to change the water in it.

²⁰ For an example of false ideas about Grossman’s relationship with his wife during his last years, see Menaker (2007).

[...] я опять и опять хочу сказать тебе, что как бы не сложилась жизнь в дальнейшем, то глубокое, серьезное, важное, что сложилось в наших долгих, честных с тобой отношениях никогда не уйдет из моей души, не может из нее уйти²¹.

4. *Letters to Ekaterina Vasilevna Zabolotskaia*

Grossman's letters to his father have long been accessible in archives. The existence of his correspondence with his wife was well-known, even if no one had the opportunity to read it except relatives – but the existence of a third corpus – Grossman's letters to Ekaterina Zabolotskaia – was entirely unknown.

We now know that various personal documents from Ekaterina Zabolotskaia's archive were kept by her daughter-in-law Natal'ia Andreevna Dubiago-Zabolotskaia, who in 2014 gave them to the art gallery owner and exhibition curator Il'dar Galeev. This collection includes photographs from Grossman's Armenian journey, a corpus of his letters, Zabolotskaia's short memoirs about Grossman written after his death, several letters from Zabolotskaia to Nikolai Zabolotskii, one letter from Nikolai Zabolotskii to Ekaterina, a collection of photographs of unidentified persons, and dried branches with a commentary by Zabolotskaia:

Это остаток букета осенних веток, которые В.С. Гроссман сорвал в сквере, где сидел после того, как отнес свой роман в редакцию. Ему хотелось, чтобы я сохранила этот букет. Остались две веточки...²²

In an interview we conducted with Il'dar Galeev in July 2023, he explained how these documents ended up in his possession. He came to know Natal'ia Dubiago-Zabolotskaia in 2013 while working on an exhibition of work by artists studying with Pavel Filonov in the mid-1920s; he and Natal'ia soon became friends.

Тесное общение с Натальей Андреевной привело к тому, что в какой-то момент она решила поделиться со мной семейной тайной. Помню волнующий момент, когда она извлекла из комода пачку рукописных материалов. Это были письма Василия Гроссмана, адресованные Екатерине Васильевне Заболоцкой – жене поэта, чьей невесткой Наталья Андреевна приходилась. Кроме писем Гроссмана в этом архиве находились и другие материалы Василия Семеновича, Ольги Губер и Екатерины Васильевны.

Наталья Андреевна Заболоцкая сообщила мне, что она хотела бы передать архив в мои руки, так как не может доверить его государственным архивам и сделать открытым для публикаций и обсуждений. История взаимоотношений двух людей воспринималась ею как нечто личное, не подлежащее огласке. К

²¹ "Again and again I want to tell you that no matter what happens in future, the deep, serious, meaningful things that have developed in our long and honest relationship will never leave my soul. They cannot leave it".

²² "This is what remains of a spray of autumn branches that V.S. Grossman picked in the park where he sat immediately after taking his novel to the editors. He wanted me to keep this bouquet. Two small branches are left..."

тому же была жива дочь Гроссмана – Екатерина Короткова, которая, как полагала Наталья Андреевна, могла бы реагировать строго на публикацию писем²³.

At the same time, Natal'ia Dubiago–Zabolotskaia, realised that these documents would need to be published sooner or later, and so she chose to leave it to Galeev to decide when the time would be right:

Наталья Андреевна была неизлечимо больна, боролась с недугом и опасалась за сохранность эпистолярного наследия. На мою просьбу определить срок запрета обнародования этих писем и возможность их публикации в обозримом будущем Наталья Андреевна ответила предельно просто: когда сочтете нужным²⁴.

The collection contains: 45 letters, 5 telegrams and 4 notes from Grossman to Zabolotskaia, 1 note from Grossman to Zabolotskaia's daughter Natasha, and one note from Zabolotskaia to Grossman – all the above are dated 1959 to 1962. The corpus also contains 1 letter from Ol'ga Guber to Zabolotskaia dated 1957.

Grossman's letters to Zabolotskaia, full of affection, differ in style and tone from his letters to other correspondents. In his other letters Grossman avoids talking much about himself; in his letters to Zabolotskaia, he expresses his thoughts and states of mind freely and in depth.

Several letters, for example, show his sense of approaching tragedy as he was completing *Life and Fate*. In a remarkable way, everything he says about his work in these letters echoes the words of one of his closest friends, Andrei Platonov: "Вася, ты же Христос!" [Vasia, you are Christ!] (Lipkin 1990, 5) These words, recorded by Lipkin, have been quoted many times by memoirists and researchers. It is clear that when Grossman was working on the book, he knew in advance that he would face hardships, that he was prepared to suffer for his work, and that he consciously chose this thorny path, having no illusions about the fate of his novel. We hope to discuss this in detail in future publications, and here we limit ourselves to three quotations that illustrate both his determination and his sense of sorrow and anguish.

²³ "Our friendship eventually led to her deciding to share a family secret with me. I remember an exciting moment when she took out a pile of handwritten papers from a drawer. They were letters from Vasilii Grossman to Ekaterina Vasil'evna Zabolotskaia, the wife of the poet; Natal'ia Andreevna was the poet's daughter-in-law. This archive also contained other material from Vasilii Semënovich, Ol'ga Guber and Ekaterina Vasil'evna. Natal'ia Andreevna Zabolotskaia informed me that she wanted to hand the archive over to me, since she could not entrust it to state archives and make it accessible for publication and discussion. She saw the history of the relationship between Grossman and Zabolotskaia as something personal, not for the public realm. In addition, Grossman's daughter, Ekaterina Korotkova, was still alive and Natal'ia thought she might disapprove of the letters being published."

²⁴ "Natal'ia Andreevna was terminally ill, struggling with her illness and concerned for the safety of this legacy. In response to my asking her to give me a date when it would be acceptable to publish these letters, Natal'ia Andreevna simply replied: 'Whenever you think it is right'."

We are very grateful to Il'dar Galeev for entrusting the publication of these letters to us.

Though he repeatedly referred to himself as an atheist, he wrote to Zabolotskaia on 7 September 1959:

Работать продолжаю, но видит ли бог мою работу. Хоть бы он глянул на нее, не надеюсь я на людские глаза²⁵.

On 3 October 1959 he wrote:

Нет в моей душе покоя, издергался, а впереди, совсем уже рядом, большие и жестокие испытания, которые связаны с главной моей работой в жизни. Кто поможет, на кого опереться, как писал Гоголь: “Все чужие, враждебные лица”. К ним и пойду²⁶.

On 9 October 1959 he repeated his worries about the future of the book and added that he wrote the novel because he couldn't not write it, and that he hoped to share it with others.

Задумываюсь, как же я расстанусь с людьми, с которыми был связан каждый день в течение почти шестнадцати лет. Как печальна и неясна их судьба, и как печальна и неясна судьба моей работы.

Вот прочел вчера вечером слова индийского мудреца: “Выполняй предназначенную тебе работу, но не пользуйся ее плодами – работай, не имея желания вознаградить себя, работай!”.

Может быть, я не хотел и не хочу, но по этому правилу работал и я. Но ведь не для себя работает человек, и ведь только одного я хотел и хочу – чтобы работа эта была не для меня²⁷.

Many of the letters in this corpus were written in 1961 from Armenia. In them he describes in detail his work on the Russian translation of Rachiia Kochar's novel *Children of the Big House*, published in Erevan in 1962 (Kochar 1962). We can see that this work was not easy for Grossman and that he had no respite from his sense of anxiety.

Я уж много работаю — как бы контрабандой, — то утром, то днем, то поздним вечером — надо мне спешить. Боюсь я, что затянется и это дело, а я полон

²⁵ “I continue to work, but does God see my work? I wish he would at least glance at it, I can't count on human eyes”.

²⁶ “There is no peace in my soul, I am worn out, and ahead of me, already near at hand, lie cruel and important challenges, linked to my main work in life. Who will help me? Who can I rely on? In the words of Gogol: ‘All around are alien, hostile faces.’ I must confront them”.

²⁷ “I wonder how I will say goodbye to the people with whom I have been in contact every day for almost sixteen years. How sad and uncertain their fate is – and how sad and uncertain the fate of my work. Last night I read the words of an Indian sage: ‘Do the work you are meant to do, but do not expect to enjoy its fruits! Work without any desire to reward yourself. Work!’ Maybe I didn't want to and still don't, but that is the rule I have worked by. A man does not work for himself, and there is only one thing I wanted and still want – that this work should not be for my sake alone”.

какой-то плохой тревоги, не оставляет она меня и под голубым небом, и на берегу синего озера. Тяжело мне²⁸. (7 November 1961)

In his letters to Ekaterina Zabolotskaia (as well as in letters to Ol'ga Guber and Semën Lipkin), Grossman records his impressions of Erevan, of life in Tsakhkadzor, of an Armenian wedding, of Lake Sevan, of the Molokan community, of his meeting with the Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, etc.). In some instances they correspond to passages from *An Armenian Sketchbook*; in others they provide researchers with completely new material. A comparative analysis of the letters and the sketchbook is therefore an important task for researchers.

5. *Entering the private sphere*

Through reading the entire corpora of letters readers will, for the first time, be granted the opportunity to get to know Grossman not through the interpretations of scholars, but directly, without any filter. They will be able to see one of the greatest Twentieth century writers as a person who experienced joy, excitement, fear, doubt and all the other emotions that we have all experienced. This will be of great value.

It will be all the more valuable because it was widely believed that Grossman was almost a misanthrope, a depressive often quick to resort to sarcasm²⁹. It is indeed true that in these letters he sometimes jokes about his acquaintances and criticises them, and that his closest friend Semën Lipkin is the most frequent target of his mockery. For example, on 4 March 1959, telling Zabolotskaia about staying with Lipkin in Yalta, Grossman writes:

Сема трудится, обложенный таким количеством толстых словарей, что его самого не видно за фолиантами. Он щеголяет в невероятных прыгуневых туфлях, взволновавших всю Ялту: старики покачивают головами, молодые говорят "ого", а мальчишки идут следом³⁰.

But the jokes and sarcasms are few and far between. The most important feature of his letters, throughout his life, is his sincere attentiveness to the addressee – whoever that may be – as well as to other people in his field of vision³¹. Below are just a few examples of the hundreds that could be quoted.

²⁸ "I work all hours – as if I were a smuggler – in the morning, in the afternoon, late at night. I must hurry. I am afraid that this business will drag on for too long, and I am full of bad feelings, which do not leave me even under the blue sky and on the shore of the blue lake. Nothing is easy for me".

²⁹ Gedda Surits, for example, wrote in her memoirs in 1966: "трудный человек, резкий и неуживчивый" [a difficult man, harsh and unfriendly] (Surits 1998, 431).

³⁰ "Sema labours away, surrounded by so many thick dictionaries that he cannot be seen behind the folios. He is wearing improbably smart fabric shoes that excite the whole of Yalta; the old men shake their heads, the young men say 'Wow!' and the boys follow close at his heels".

³¹ Among those who insisted that Grossman's misanthropy was only a myth were Lazar' Lazarev (Lazarev 2000) and Anna Berzer (Berzer 1990, 255).

Береги себя, дорогой мой. Не переутомляйся. Ты знаешь, теперь я доволен собой, много работаю, устаю (счастливая усталость после долгого безделья) и единственная тяжесть это мамино здоровье и ты. Я себя чувствую, как бы виноватым перед вами. Не знаю почему, но когда думаю о том, что ты так одинок, мне кажется, что я не делаю для тебя того, что могу сделать³². (the very first letter to father that reached us, 12 December 1925)

Папа, очень меня огорчило сообщение твое о Наде, несчастные они, и совершенно беспомощные женщины – одна глухая, вторая слепая [*двоюродная сестра Гроссмана Надежда Алмаз и ее мать Елизавета Савельевна*. – Ю.В., А.К.]. По возвращении в Москву постараюсь их хоть материально поддержать немного (to father, 14 July 1948)³³.

Перехожу к Сёме Липкину. Вышел “Новый мир” с его стихами. У стихов большой успех, много звонят, говорят о них в самых превосходных степенях. Видимо, я очень люблю Сему – счастлив так, словно все это со мной.

Теперь сообщаю тебе печальную новость: у жены Бека – Наташи Лойко – обнаружили злокачественную опухоль прямой кишки. Сегодня ее оперировали в Ленинграде, какой-то знаменитый хирург по полостным операциям. Жалко мне ее, она хорошая женщина³⁴. (to Ekaterina Zabolotskaia, 3 June 1959)

The following quotation presents the concluding lines of one of the last surviving letters that Grossman, sick with cancer, sent to his wife from a sanatorium in the autumn of 1963:

Федя выглядит неплохо — живут они мирно, но по моим наблюдениям у Иры [*Новиковой, жены Федора Губера*. – Ю.В., А.К.] характер кремневый. [...]

Привет Фене [*Фаине Абрамовне Школьниковой*. – Ю.В., А.К.], все очень сочувствуют её зубной боли, а я особенно.

Мариам [*Мариам Наумовна Черневич, переводчица с французского, подруга Гроссмана и Губера*. – Ю.В., А.К.] очень хороший человек³⁵. (to Olga Guber, 9 October 1963)

³² “Take care of yourself, my dear. Don’t tire yourself out. I’m at ease with myself now. I’m working hard, getting tired (a happy tiredness after a long period of idleness) and my only worry now is Mum’s health and your own. I feel somewhat guilty before you. I don’t know why, but when I think of you being so lonely, I feel I’m not doing all I could for you”.

³³ “Dad, I was very upset to hear about Nadia. They [*Grossman’s cousin Nadia Almaz and her mother Elizaveta Savel’evna*. – A.K., J.V.] are unhappy and utterly helpless – one is deaf and the other blind. On my return to Moscow I will try to give them at least some financial support”.

³⁴ “And now to Sëma Lipkin. Novy Mir has now come out, with his poems. The poems are a great success. There have been lots of phone calls. People are praising them very highly indeed. It seems I truly do love Sëma – I’m happy as if all this were happening to me. Now for the sad news: Bek’s wife Natasha Loiko has been diagnosed with a malignant tumour of the rectum. She was operated on today in Leningrad, by a famous cavity surgeon. I feel sorry for her, she’s a good woman”.

³⁵ “Fedia looks well – they live peacefully, but from what I’ve seen, Ira is someone very unbending [*Novikova, Fëdor Guber’s wife*. – A.K., J.V.]. [...]

Say Hello to Fenia [*Faina Abramovna Shkol’nikova*. – A.K., J.V.], everyone is very sorry about her toothache and especially me.

It is clear from the letters that there is still much to discover about Grossman's relationship with other writers and his appreciation of their work, as well as about his inner circle.

From the letters to Ol'ga Guber and Ekaterina Zabolotskaia we learn, for example, that Grossman thought very highly of the poetry of Slutskii, whom he saw regularly when they were neighbours for some time in the late 1950s and 1960s (Falikov 2018). For instance, on 25 May 1958 he wrote to Ol'ga Guber: "Заходил ко мне Слуцкий, читал стихи, он очень талантлив, — мне он нравится больше всех поэтов нашего времени". [Slutskii came to see me and read his poetry, he's very talented – I like him more than any other poet of our time.] We also get to know that he met Mikhail Zoshchenko and that he very much liked him: "[Zoshchenko] удивительно милый, особенный какой то человек" [an amazingly nice, special person] (to Ol'ga Guber, 16 February). We also learn that Grossman was fond of Vera Panova and her husband David Dar. We read about his friendships with Andrei Platonov and with Ruvim Fraerman (one of the co-authors of *The Black Book*), about his view of Paustovskii, about his long and complicated relationship with Aleksandr Tvardovskii, and much more.

The letters also tell us a lot about Grossman's interests. We see that Grossman was interested not only in fiction, but also in non-fiction, biographies and memoirs, and that he kept up with new publications. From a letter to Zabolotskaia dated 20 March 1959:

Читаю я сейчас книжку: *Кибернетика и общество* Виннера, она трудная, особенно первая половина, но очень интересная. Прочел большие, двухтомные мемуары Рузвельт и Гопкинс [*Роберта Шервуда*. – Ю.В., А.К.] — тоже очень интересные. Вот приеду, буду тебе немного рассказывать, очень любопытные вещи в виннеровской книжке. [...]

Прочел книжку м-ме Ферми *Атом у нас дома* [*Атомы у нас дома*. – Ю.В., А.К.] – ее воспоминания о муже, знаменитом физике. Дама-то довольно ничтожная, но книжка исключительно занимательная, интереснее романов, даже приключенческих³⁶.

We know that he eagerly played cards and that, during his visits to *Doma tvorchestva* [Houses of Creative Work], sanatoriums and houses of recreation, he enjoyed going to the cinema. For example, on 20 September 1963 in a letter to Ol'ga Guber he lists all the films that he saw at the Arkhangel'skoe sanatorium:

По вечерам смотрю кино. Видел уже следующие картины: "Три плюс два", "Каин XVIII", "Моя жена хочет петь", "Я хочу танцевать", "Молодой мальчик",

Mariam is a very good person [*Mariam Naumovna Chernevich, translator from French, friend of both Grossman and Guber*. – A.K., J.V.]".

³⁶ "I am reading a book: *Cybernetics and Society* by Wiener. It is difficult, especially the first half, but very interesting. I read the long, two-volume memoirs *Roosevelt and Hopkins* [by Robert Sherwood. – A.K., J.V.] – also very interesting. When I'll return, I'll tell you a little more. There are some very curious things in Wiener's book. [...] I read M.me Fermi's book *Atom in the Family* [*Atoms in the Family*. – A.K., J.V.] – her memoirs about her husband, a famous physicist. The lady is rather a non-entity, but the book is extremely entertaining, more interesting than novels, even adventure novels".

“Банда подлесцов”. Впечатление произвела только одна картина: “Банда подлесцов” — это тяжелая, напряженная драма времен войны³⁷.

And on 30 September he concludes: “Насмотрелся кино так, что год не буду смотреть.” [I’ve now seen so many films that I won’t want to see any more for a year.]

From the three corpora of correspondence we also learn many precious details about Grossman’s work, some of them previously unknown. For instance, the letters (to Ol’ga Guber; 23 November 1941, 29 November 1941, 2 December 1941 and others) show that Grossman originally planned to write the short novel *The People Immortal* together with Gabrilovich, and, moreover, that they shared the initial idea.

Мы здесь с Женей Габриловичем задумали написать совместно повесть, роман на современном военном материале. Составили подробный план, послали его в Москву — если редактор утвердит, приступим к работе. Может получиться очень интересная вещь. И работа эта увлекательна и содержательна и материально может дать порядочно — ведь потом книжку можно будет издать³⁸.

Besides we get to know that the military correspondent Pëtr Illarionovich Kolomeitsev, whom Grossman admired, was a military adviser in the writing of the story:

Должен сказать тебе, что меня уже тянет в поездку, мечтаю поехать с Коломейцевым. Он чудный человек, между прочим он военный консультант по моей рукописи — умный, с большим вкусом, тонкий. Прекрасный, ей-богу, человек³⁹. (to Ol’ga Guber, 23 July 1942)

Other letters confirm assumptions made earlier. For instance, it was already known, above all from Fëdor Guber’s publications, that editors had made changes — sometimes major changes — to some of his war essays without his knowledge and consent and to his great frustration. Now we have more evidence of this. On 8 October 1942 for instance, Grossman wrote to his wife: “На днях (26^{го}) оказывается был напечатан малый кусок моего 2-ого очерка в совершенно неузнаваемом виде, я его не узнал”⁴⁰. [The other day (26th

³⁷ “In the evenings I go to the cinema. I have already seen all the following: *Three Plus Two*, *Cain XVIII*, *My Wife Makes Music*, *I Want to Dance*, *Young Boy*, *No Man’s Land*. Only one picture impressed me: *No Man’s Land* — it is a weighty, tense drama set during the war”.

³⁸ “Zhenia Gabrilovich and I are thinking of writing a novel based on contemporary military material. We have prepared a detailed plan and sent it to Moscow — if the editor approves it, we’ll get down to work. It could be very interesting. The work will be interesting and meaningful, and we could be well paid for it, since in due course it can be published as a separate book”.

³⁹ “I must tell you that I am already tempted to go on this trip. My dream is to go with Kolomeitsev. He is a wonderful man. He is, by the way, my military consultant for my manuscript. He’s intelligent and subtle, with good taste. A wonderful man, honestly”.

⁴⁰ This is an essay that was printed on 26 September 1942 in the newspaper *Krasnaia Zvezda* [Red Star] with the title *In a steppe ravine* (Grossman 1942); and later, in the collections *Stalingrad* and *The Years of War*, with the title *The Company of Young Artillerymen*. This later version is more complete and clearly closer to the author’s original version (Grossman 1943; Grossman 1947).

it turns out that a small part of my second essay was printed in a completely unrecognisable form. I truly didn't recognise it.]

The letters, which cover more than 35 years, trace almost the whole of Grossman's path as a writer. We see the beginner who sent his first works to Gorkii in 1932; we see the popular Soviet writer of the 1930s and 1940s, whose articles about the war were read by millions; we see the writer who works selflessly on the main novel of his life, then falls into disgrace, unable to publish much of his best work.

The letters include frequent mentions of Grossman's difficulties in getting his work published during his last years, of how long he had to wait for answers from editors, and of instances when permission for the publication of a particular work was withdrawn even after it had initially been accepted. From late April to early June 1959, for example, Grossman was engaged in an eventually unsuccessful struggle to get his story *Tiergarten* published in the journal *Znamia*.

К печали своей в этом письме могу, как обещал в телеграмме, дополнительно сообщить о судьбе рассказа, — он с треском снят Главлитом. Правда, редакция не теряет надежды и собирается хлопотать о нем, но, думаю, эти хлопоты помогут, как мертвому банки. Так как события последних дней меня уж подготовили к тому, что рассказ не будет напечатан, я не особенно переживаю всё это⁴¹. (to Ol'ga Guber, 28 April 1959)

С рассказом появились кое-какие просветы. Прочел его наконец Поликарпов, я говорил с ним по телефону, — он за. Однако для снятия запрета нужно, чтобы еще кое-кто прочел. Поликарпов обещал не затягивать. Условились с ним о встрече в ближайшие дни. Буду сообщать тебе, как только появятся новости⁴². (to Ekaterina Zabolotskaia, 3 June 1959)

In a letter to Zabolotskaia dated 18 December 1961 Grossman told her about the preparation of a collection of stories *Old Teacher*, to be brought out in 1962 by the publishing house *Sovetskii pisatel'*.

Получил письмо от редакторши Ивановой, издательство сняло 4 рассказа, те, что именно я хотел особо напечатать, — все делают прямо противоположно моему желанию. Я написал ей, пусть так уж сдают книгу, спорить, находясь за 3

⁴¹ "Sadly, I can now say more, as I promised in my telegram, about the fate of my story – Glavlit [*the State censors*. – R. C.] have put their foot down hard. Although the editors have not given up hope and are still trying to save the story, I think they are wasting their time. Since the events of the last few days have prepared me for all this, I am no longer particularly upset about the story not being published".

⁴² "There are some gleams of hope for the story. Polikarpov has finally read it. I spoke to him on the phone – he is in favour of publication. But for the ban to be lifted, someone else has to read it too. Polikarpov promised not to delay. We agreed to meet in the next few days. I'll let you know as soon as there's any news".

т[ысячи] километров от Москвы нельзя, а в Москву я приеду нескоро. Ну, бог с ними⁴³.

To conclude the presentation of the three corpora, we must not forget that there are other letters without which the study of the writer's correspondence will remain incomplete. Some of them are known and have been published, such as Grossman's letters to Semën Lipkin, edited by Elena Makarova (Grossman 2016). There are various other corpora of letters about which we know very little.

Ekaterina Korotkova has testified that Grossman corresponded both with her and with his first wife Anna Matsuk (Korotkova 2014, 205, 226); according to Korotkova's memoirs, the letters to her were destroyed by her father-in-law Victor Baranov (Korotkova–Grossman 2014, 66). There is also evidence of Grossman's correspondence with his daughter over the years in his letters to other people. For instance, on 25 November 1961 he wrote to Zabolotskaia: "Получил письмо от Кати, — в нем все, что полагается быть в письме дочери — и тревога о моем здоровье, и вопросы о том, как устроен, и вопросы о красоте Армении." [I received a letter from Katia – it contains everything a letter from a daughter should contain – concerns about my health, and questions about my mood, and questions about the beauty of Armenia.] It is still unclear whether all of Grossman's letters to his daughter were destroyed, or whether some survived and are now in private archives and may be discovered one day. The fate of Ekaterina Korotkova's letters to her father, which are of particular interest to researchers, is also unknown.

In some of the letters from the corpora we have studied, Grossman mentions ongoing correspondence with his friends and relatives: with his stepson Fëdor Guber, with his cousin Nadezhda Almaz, with Klara Sherentsis (the wife of his cousin Viktor), with Efim Kugel', Semën Tumarkin, Semën Gecht, Ruvim Fraerman, Faina Shkol'nikova, Mariam Chernevich and others. One of the most important directions for future research should therefore be to continue searching for and collecting Grossman's correspondence.

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⁴³ "I received a letter from my editor Ivanova, saying that they have withdrawn four stories – the very ones I most wanted to publish. Everything they do is the exact opposite of what I want. I told her to go ahead and publish the book anyway. It's impossible to argue when I'm 3000 kilometres away from Moscow, and it'll be quite some time before I return. Well, God be with them".

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